

Introduction.

Working locally since 1984 and providing a woodland and arboricultural service, there are few who have done more to sustain local trees and woodlands as myself.

As such I wouldn't be supporting this application if I considered any detriment would accrue to the trees and the important biodiversity of Little Copse.

There have been misunderstandings in the assessment of this proposal, exacerbated by the paucity of site visits and material considerations have been misinterpreted.

The site.

This small open area, once polluted, much excavated, made-up ground, NOT 'a large area of woodland'. Growth structure of the adjacent woodland trees demonstrates that this has not been woodland for many years.

Proposals will NOT result in the loss of any existing woodland habitat.

Woodland classification.

The Inventory of Ancient Woodland includes land continuously wooded since 1600. Little Copse is included on neither the Rocque map of 1761 nor on the Inventory.

Some other historic maps, including Ordnance Survey, depict the area as scrub.

The oak are not 'Veteran' trees by any recognised authority; in 100years, they might be.

The indicator species and features are NOT exclusive to 'Ancient woodland'.

Little Copse is 'secondary woodland'; insisting that the advanced protection rightly accorded to 'ancient woodland' and 'veteran trees' is misplaced.

Potential harm to woodland habitat.

Council documents uses phrases such as "direct impact", 'loss of habitat', 'detrimental' etc. to both retained trees and the visual amenity. These assertions have not been explained or demonstrated.

In contrast:

The proposed damage mitigation within the application adheres to the recommendations in BS5837, the 'bible' when it comes to building near trees.

The proposals will NOT intrude into or affect the existing copse.

The building and robust fencing will provide a permanent barrier, outside the tree-line, between the cattle husbandry operation and the delicate woodland habitat for the future.

The straw bedding system and internal drainage is designed to prevent seepage of any exudate

Extensive drainage in the yard using the natural gradient will prevent the likelihood of external run-off towards the copse, all doing away with the need for a habitat buffer.

As such, proposals fulfil NPPF175; significant harm is 'adequately mitigated'.

Visual Amenity

The proposed barns are tucked at the back of the yard and will NOT diminish the visual benefits provided by the wooded skyline of Little Copse.

Both alternative positions proposed by the Council are further forward, with vastly greater impact on the skyline and thus the visual amenity of the local countryside.

Additional native woodland and hedge planting is proposed, more than doubling the area of the site, screening the yard and inter-linking hedgerows, Little Copse and Redding's Copse. The green infrastructure will be enhanced, increasing biodiversity and increasing ecological corridors for fauna and migrating flora.

Summary

These barns will:

- have no undue impact on the existing habitat of Little Copse.
- have an imperceptible effect on the visual amenity, nearby or more distant.
- result in net increase in native habitat.
- result in significantly more benefits to the countryside than potential disadvantages.

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